

Department of Education and Skills - Main Estimate Features

Gross Allocation 2015	
	€m
Exchequer allocation for gross current expenditure	7,917
Exchequer allocation for gross capital expenditure	530
Allocation for National Training Fund	362
Total overall allocation	8,809

The 2015 Estimate provides for the recruitment of approximately 900 extra mainstream teachers and 480 Resource Teachers in schools. Provision is also made for the employment of extra Special Needs Assistants, with an increased ceiling of 11,330 posts for 2015. Funding is included for the progression of key policy initiatives including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (€6 million), Junior Cycle Reform (€5 million), high-speed broadband for second level schools (€3 million), the Music Generation Project (€1m) and the recruitment of additional inspectors for Early Years education settings (€0.6 million). A further €5 million will be made available in capital funding as part of the 3 year €15 million investment to extend book rental schemes to cover all primary schools.

Schools

The Estimate allows for adjustments in teacher numbers for demographics and also provides for increases in Resource Teacher numbers in order to maintain individual allocations at existing levels. This will give rise to an increase in overall teacher numbers of the order of 1,380. The existing cap on SNA numbers of 10,965 posts will be increased by 365 posts to 11,330, mainly in response to demographic pressures.

Staffing schedules are not being increased in the Budget. The table below shows estimated numbers of teachers and SNAs in schools for the 2015/2016 year.

TEACHERS	Primary sector (posts)	Second level sector (posts)	Total posts
Projected numbers for end 2014	33,725	28,365	62,090
Estimated additional posts in 2015 to cater for increased demographics and provision for additional resource teachers*	+ 910 (600 demographics + 310 Resource Teachers)	+ 470 (300 demographics + 170 Resource Teachers)	+ 1,380
Projected total number of teachers at end 2015	34,635	28,835	63,470
SNAs	Primary sector (posts)	Second level sector (posts)	Total posts

Existing 2014 Employment Control Framework (ECF) Ceiling	8,770	2,195	10,965
Estimated additional posts* between now and end 2015 to cater mainly for increased demographics (145 of additional 365 posts in place before end 2014)	270	95	+ 365
Projected total number of SNAs at end 2015	9,040	2,290	11,330

* Increases in Resource Teacher and SNA numbers will require a Government decision

Special Education

Funding for special education provision in 2015 will amount to some €1.37bn billion, which is equivalent to 17.3% of the gross overall current allocation for education and training.

Higher Education

The reduction in the funding allocation to Higher Education Institutions of €25 million, implemented in Budgets 2013 and 2014, will be restored in 2015.

Further Education and Training

The allocation for further education and training, through both Voted expenditure and the National Training Fund, will enable the provision of approximately 270,000 further education and training places to be maintained.

Student Support

Students who are entitled to maintenance grants under the student grant scheme will from 2015/16 receive four months of maintenance payments before the end of December and five months payments in the following year. This is a change to the current arrangement whereby three months payments are made before end December and six months payments are made the following year, and takes account of requests to alleviate financial difficulties being experienced by students due to the fact that the academic year now starts earlier in many higher education institutions. Payments to the Higher Education Institutions in respect of the student contribution for those students receiving student grants will be paid in two instalments, in December 2015 and January 2016, rather than in a single instalment.

Previous Budget Measures Impacting in 2015

The allocation for 2015 also takes account of savings deriving from measures announced in previous Budgets which will be implemented in 2015. These measures are summarised below:

Student contribution in higher education-

A final €250 increase in the student contribution, arising from a decision in Budget 2013, will bring the amount of the contribution to €3,000 for the 2015/16 academic year. This measure will secure net savings of €17 million in 2016. All students eligible for student grants will continue to have the student contribution paid on their behalf. Currently over 50% of under-graduates are in receipt of some form of student grant. The rates of maintenance grants are being protected in this Budget.

Capitation grants-

A final 1% reduction in capitation and related grants to primary and post-primary schools, under a measure announced in Budget 2012, will take place in 2015 and will yield savings of approximately €3 million, achieved by a reduction in the standard capitation rates, with other related grant rates remaining unchanged. The new standard mainstream capitation rates in 2015 will be €170 (from €173) for primary and €296 (from €301) for post-primary. This reduction, however, will be offset by an additional allocation of approximately €5 million to provide for increased pupil numbers in schools.

Capitation rates in Youthreach, VTOS and PLC colleges are also being reduced by a final 1% in 2015 (yield €1 million), while core pay and non-pay funding grants to higher education institutions will also be reduced by a final 1%, yielding €11 million.

Capital Expenditure Allocation

The capital allocation of €530 million will be principally deployed on the school sector (€450m), Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects (€18m) and on Higher Education projects (€55m).

The focus in the school sector continues to be the provision of additional permanent places to meet the demographic need at both primary and post-primary levels. Later this year the 2015 Large Scale Projects Programme will be announced and these projects will be primed to advance to tender and construction throughout 2015. The announcement will also include details of the projects on the 2013 and 2014 programmes that are on site. It is expected that over 50 large scale projects will reach substantial completion in 2015.

School places are not only delivered by the completion of Large Scale School Projects but also under the devolved Additional Accommodation Scheme. Other expenditure items in 2015 will include acquiring sites for school buildings, the emergency works scheme, the 2014 Summer Works Scheme, funding furniture and equipment requests and other smaller commitments.

Most of the PPP allocation is in respect of Unitary Charges associated with Bundle 3 Schools.

Expenditure on the Higher Education sector will feature the completion of the St Patrick's Teacher Training College, Drumcondra and on-going development works at DIT Grangegorman as well as the commencement of the Human Biology Building at NUI Galway, an extension to the library at Limerick University, construction of the Confucius Institute at UCD and an infrastructure fund for the institute of technology sector.

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